

# WELCOME TO NORTH IDAHO

YOUR COMPLIMENTARY RELOCATION GUIDE  
TO THE BEAUTIFUL GEM STATE

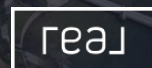
2026

YOUR LOCAL REAL ESTATE EXPERTS &  
Sandpoint's #1 Boutique Real Estate Team  
**ELITE REALTY PARTNERS**  
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**ELITE REALTY**  
PARTNERS





# MEET YOUR LOCAL REAL ESTATE EXPERTS ELITE REALTY PARTNERS

On behalf of Elite Realty Partners, I would like to welcome you to our community, the beautiful North Idaho.

We designed this guide to introduce you to our area, as well as serve as a practical resource as you consider making North Idaho home.

Elite Realty Partners has been voted Sandpoint's Real Estate Agency of the Year three years running: 2024, 2025, and 2026, and is backed by more than 140 five-star, verified Google reviews. Our reputation has been built on trust, transparency, and results.

We're a boutique, team-based real estate company built around seven core values: family, collaboration, innovation, integrity, hard work, kindness, and humility. Those values shape how we work with our clients.

Our goal with this guide, and throughout your move, isn't to convince you to relocate to Sandpoint. It's to give you the information you need to make the right decision for yourself and your family.

Welcome to Sandpoint, voted America's Most Beautiful Small Town!

**WORK HARD.**  
*Be Kind*



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\*\*\* **SCHEDULE A CALL WITH BEN**



# GETTING HERE & GETTING AROUND

*From Spokane*

Most residents and visitors fly into **Spokane International Airport (GEG)** just across the state line in Washington, then drive east into North Idaho. Here's what that trip looks like from town to town.

## DRIVE TIMES FROM GEG

|                |                           |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Coeur d'Alene  | 40 mi • ~40-45 min        |
| Rathdrum       | 37 mi • ~35-40 min        |
| Athol          | 50 mi • ~1 hr-1 hr 10 min |
| Sandpoint      | 78 mi • ~1 hr 25-30 min   |
| Bonniers Ferry | 108 mi • ~2 hr 10-15 min  |

*Times reflect typical drive conditions on I-90 and US-95; add extra time in winter weather or holiday traffic.*

## QUICK FACTS

- Coeur d'Alene Airport – Pappy Boyington Field (COE), regional airport serving Kootenai County
- Sandpoint Airport (SZT), regional airport in Bonner County
- Boundary County Airport (65S), regional airport serving Bonners Ferry



## GETTING AROUND

Once you're off the plane, two main routes carry almost all north-south and east-west travel through the region.

## FREEWAYS & HIGHWAYS

**I-90** runs east-west, connecting Spokane to Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls in minutes. **US Highway 95** is the north-south spine, linking Coeur d'Alene up through Rathdrum, Sandpoint, and Bonners Ferry all the way to the Canadian border. **Highway 200** runs east into Montana and **Highway 2** runs west into Washington.

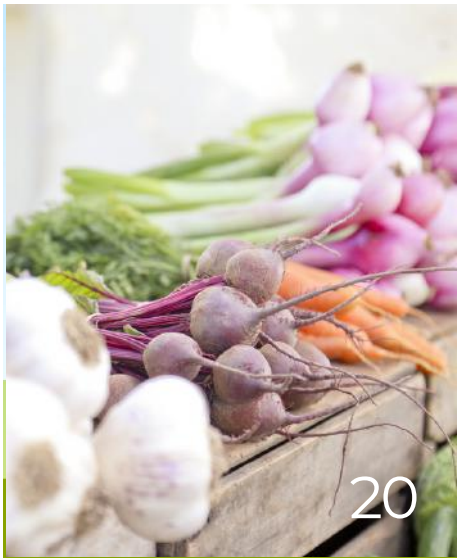
## TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

A personal vehicle is the practical choice throughout North Idaho; rideshare coverage thins out fast beyond Coeur d'Alene. Rental cars are available at GEG, and shuttle services connect the airport to Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint by reservation.

## NEW RESIDENT ESSENTIALS

**DRIVER'S LICENSE & VEHICLE REGISTRATION:** Complete both within 30 days of establishing Idaho residency. Visit your local county's DMV office or schedule an appointment online for faster service.

**HOMEOWNER'S EXEMPTION:** Did you know that Idaho offers a \$125,000 exemption on the taxable assessed value of your primary residence? Apply through your county assessor's office once your home is owner-occupied.



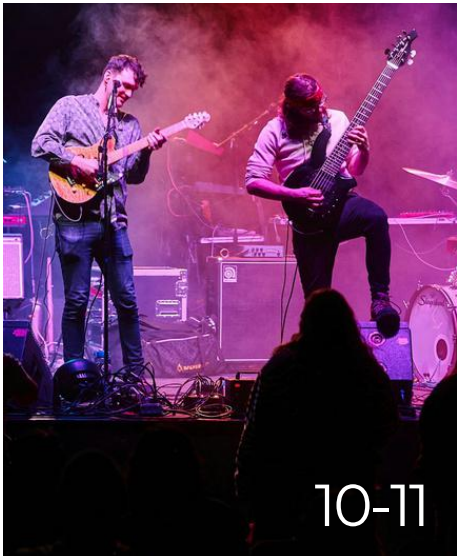
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\*\*\* [CLICK TO VIEW HOMES FOR SALE IN SANDPOINT](#)

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# 12 REASONS TO LOVE NORTH IDAHO

## **SAFETY**

Idaho consistently ranks among the safest states in the country. According to 2024 FBI crime data, Idaho's violent crime rate was about 36% below the national average, while its property crime rate was 58% lower — the lowest of any state in the nation. For many people considering North Idaho, that sense of safety is a major part of the appeal.

## **TRAFFIC**

In general, traffic throughout North Idaho is light compared with most metropolitan areas, but Sandpoint in particular tends to feel far less stressful. While summer tourism, road construction, and winter ski traffic can create busier periods, getting around town is still relatively simple and long daily commutes are uncommon.

## **FREEDOM**

North Idaho is known for its independent spirit and strong appreciation for personal freedom. Many residents value self-reliance, private property rights, limited government, and a state culture that strongly supports the Second Amendment. For people looking for a place that aligns with those values, that can be an important part of the appeal.

## **CLEANLINESS**

North Idaho takes pride in maintaining clean, inviting communities and protecting the natural beauty that surrounds them. From downtown streets and public parks to trails, beaches, and waterfront areas, residents, businesses, and local organizations put considerable effort into keeping the area clean and enjoyable.

## **FAMILY-ORIENTED**

Schweitzer, youth sports, community festivals, hiking, biking, and local parks create year-round opportunities for families to spend time together.

## **ARTS & CULTURE**

For a small town, Sandpoint has a surprisingly active arts and cultural scene. Live music, local galleries, theater, festivals, farmers markets, and community events bring plenty of personality and entertainment to the area throughout the year.

## **PROXIMITY TO NATURE**

Nature isn't something you have to drive hours to experience here. Sandpoint is surrounded by mountains, forests, rivers, and lakes, giving residents quick access to hiking, fishing, hunting, boating, camping, and countless other outdoor activities.

## **FOUR INCREDIBLE SEASONS**

North Idaho experiences four very distinct seasons, each offering something different. Summers are built around the lake, fall brings incredible color, winters mean snow and skiing, and spring brings the mountains and forests back to life.

## **LAKE & MOUNTAIN RECREATION**

Few places combine lake and mountain recreation quite like North Idaho. Lake Pend Oreille, Lake Coeur d'Alene, and Priest Lake offer boating, fishing, swimming, and paddling throughout the warmer months, while Schweitzer provides skiing, snowboarding, mountain biking, hiking, and year-round mountain adventure.

## **STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

Sandpoint still feels like a place where people know their neighbors and support local businesses. Community events, youth programs, nonprofits, schools, and local organizations create connections that can be harder to find in larger cities.

## **ACCESS TO PUBLIC LAND**

North Idaho is surrounded by an incredible amount of public land. National forests, state lands, trails, lakes, rivers, and mountain ranges provide residents with seemingly endless opportunities to explore, recreate, hunt, fish, camp, and get away from crowds.

## **SLOWER PACE OF LIFE**

Life moves a little differently in North Idaho. Sandpoint offers fewer crowds, shorter commutes, and a more relaxed pace, while Coeur d'Alene and Spokane are still close enough when you want access to more shopping, dining, healthcare, or entertainment.

# OUR FOUR SEASONS

## SPRING

### MARCH

High 46° | Low 29F°  
Sunrise 6:58 AM | Sunset 6:51 PM

### APRIL

High 56° | Low 35F°  
Sunrise 5:55 AM | Sunset 7:37 PM

### MAY

High 66F° | Low 42F°  
Sunrise 5:06 AM | Sunset 8:19 PM

## SUMMER

### JUNE

High 72F° | Low 48F°  
Sunrise 4:44 AM | Sunset 8:53 PM

### JULY

High 82F° | Low 52F°  
Sunrise 5:01 AM | Sunset 8:42 PM

### AUGUST

High 82F° | Low 50F°  
Sunrise 5:40 AM | Sunset 7:59 PM

## FALL

### SEPTEMBER

High 72F° | Low 52F°  
Sunrise 6:23 AM | Sunset 5:58 PM

### OCTOBER

High 56F° | Low 34F°  
Sunrise 7:06 AM | Sunset 5:56 PM

### NOVEMBER

High 42F° | Low 29F°  
Sunrise 7:15 AM | Sunset 4:07 PM

## WINTER

### DECEMBER

High 34F° | Low 22F°  
Sunrise 7:28 AM | Sunset 3:52 PM

### JANUARY

High 34F° | Low 22F°  
Sunrise 7:30 AM | Sunset 4:19 PM

### FEBRUARY

High 38F° | Low 24F°  
Sunrise 6:52 AM | Sunset 5:08 PM

**Sandpoint, Idaho, is a true four-season community.** On average, the area sees around 175 days of sunshine, 34 inches of rain, and 64 inches of snow each year. Summers are warm and generally dry, fall brings cooler temperatures and vibrant color, winters are cold and snowy, and spring is typically cool and wet as the landscape turns green again.

### DAYLIGHT THROUGH THE YEAR

One of the most noticeable parts of life in Sandpoint is how much daylight changes throughout the year. In the summer, days are long, with sunrise arriving before 5:00 AM and sunsets stretching to nearly 9:00 PM around June. That gives residents more time for lake days, evening walks, and outdoor recreation after work. In the winter, the opposite is true, with the sun setting before 4:00 PM in December. For many people, that seasonal shift becomes part of the rhythm of living in North Idaho.

### A COMFORTABLE CLIMATE

Sandpoint's relatively low humidity makes both summer heat and winter cold feel more manageable than in many wetter or more humid climates. The changing seasons support year-round recreation, from skiing and snowboarding in winter to hiking, biking, boating, and lake days in summer.

### OUTDOOR WINTERIZATION TIPS

- Blow out sprinkler systems before freezing temperatures arrive.
- Disconnect hoses and protect exterior faucets before temperatures consistently drop below freezing.
- Clean gutters and downspouts before snow and ice begin to accumulate.
- Winterize boats, RVs, campers, and other seasonal equipment before the first hard freeze.
- Keep snow-removal equipment ready — significant snowfall is simply part of living in North Idaho.

\*\*\* [CLICK TO VIEW WATERFRONT HOMES FOR SALE IN SANDPOINT](#)



FROM SPRING TO WINTER

# EVENTS FOR EVERY SEASON

North Idaho thrives on year-round adventure, offering a vibrant calendar of events to enjoy in every season. From lively spring festivals and summer concerts under the stars to colorful fall harvest celebrations and magical winter holiday markets, there's always something happening to bring communities together. Whether you're seeking family-friendly fun, cultural experiences, or outdoor excitement, North Idaho events showcase the region's unique charm and boundless spirit no matter the time of year.



# SPRING

## SCHPRING FINALE — Schweitzer

Schweitzer wraps up its winter season each spring with its Schpring Finale and closing-weekend celebrations. Skiers and riders enjoy the final turns of the season, live entertainment, and springtime festivities on the mountain before the resort transitions toward summer operations. Schweitzer's winter season typically runs into early or mid-April, weather permitting.

## LOST IN THE '50s — Sandpoint

A longtime Sandpoint tradition held each May, Lost in the '50s brings classic cars, a downtown parade, live music, and plenty of nostalgia to the community. The event is traditionally held the third weekend in May.

## LAKE PEND OREILLE SPRING FISHING DERBY — Sandpoint

Hosted by the Lake Pend Oreille Idaho Club, this annual spring derby brings anglers to Lake Pend Oreille for several days of competitive fishing. The event has deep roots in the area's fishing culture and typically takes place in late April and early May.

## SANDPOINT FARMERS MARKET OPENING — Sandpoint

Spring marks the return of the Sandpoint Farmers Market at Farmin Park downtown. Beginning in May, local growers, food producers, artists, and makers gather regularly through the warmer months, making the market a favorite part of the downtown Sandpoint experience.

## CDA MARATHON — Coeur d'Alene

Held over Memorial Day weekend, the annual Coeur d'Alene Marathon draws runners for a full marathon, half marathon, 10K, 5K, and kids events. Courses showcase the lakefront and downtown area, while spectators gather throughout the community to support participants.

## WINEFEST — Coeur d'Alene

Each spring, Downtown Coeur d'Alene hosts Winefest, inviting guests to stroll through participating downtown businesses while sampling wines paired with small bites. It's a relaxed way to enjoy the downtown district as warmer spring weather returns.

## IRONMAN 70.3 Coeur d'Alene

Each June, athletes take on a 70.3-mile triathlon through the Coeur d'Alene area, combining swimming, cycling, and running against a backdrop of Lake Coeur d'Alene and the surrounding mountains. The race also brings spectators and considerable energy to the community.

## PRIEST LAKE SPRING FESTIVAL — Priest Lake

Held over Memorial Day weekend, the annual Priest Lake Spring Festival includes a craft fair, parade, quilt show, food, and family activities, along with a 5K, 10K, and kids' run. It's a classic small-town North Idaho event and one I think is especially worth including.



\*\*\* SCHEDULE A CALL WITH BEN



# SUMMER

## **FESTIVAL AT SANDPOINT — Sandpoint**

One of Sandpoint's signature summer traditions, this annual concert series brings nationally known musicians to War Memorial Field along Lake Pend Oreille. The festival typically runs from late July into early August and combines live music with one of the best outdoor settings in North Idaho.

## **LONG BRIDGE SWIM — Sandpoint**

Held every year on the first Saturday in August, the Long Bridge Swim takes swimmers across Lake Pend Oreille alongside Sandpoint's iconic Long Bridge. Participants range from young swimmers to experienced athletes, making it a unique North Idaho summer tradition.

## **BONNER COUNTY FAIR — Sandpoint**

Each August, the Bonner County Fair celebrates the agricultural roots of the area with 4-H and livestock shows, exhibits, food, entertainment, competitions, and family activities. It remains one of the area's biggest community gatherings of the summer.

## **SANDPOINT PRCA RODEO — Sandpoint**

The annual Sandpoint PRCA Rodeo brings professional rodeo action to the Bonner County Fairgrounds each August. Bull riding, bronc riding, barrel racing, roping, and other traditional events make it a popular summer weekend for locals and visitors.

## **SUMMER SAMPLER — Sandpoint**

This popular downtown event brings together Sandpoint restaurants and caterers for an evening of food and community. Attendees can sample dishes from local chefs while enjoying the atmosphere of downtown Sandpoint during the height of summer.

## **CHAFE 150 GRAN FONDO — Sandpoint**

Held each June, the CHAFE 150 brings cyclists to Sandpoint for scenic road and gravel routes through the Cabinet Mountains and Lake Pend Oreille region. The charity ride has been held since 2008 and supports education and literacy programs in the Lake Pend Oreille School District.

## **SANDPOINT ANTIQUE & CLASSIC BOAT SHOW — Sandpoint**

Each July, beautifully restored wooden and classic boats gather along the Sandpoint waterfront. The event celebrates Lake Pend Oreille's boating culture while giving visitors a chance to see an impressive collection of vintage watercraft.

## **RACE THE WOLF — Schweitzer**

Race the Wolf takes trail runners into the rugged terrain surrounding Schweitzer. The annual mountain race features steep climbs, single-track trails, and sweeping views across Lake Pend Oreille and the surrounding mountains.

## **NORTHWEST WINEFEST — Schweitzer**

Schweitzer's annual Northwest Winefest combines regional wine tasting with live music, food vendors, and summer activities in the mountain village. It's a relaxed way to experience Schweitzer when the snow is gone and the mountain turns to summer recreation.

## **FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION — Coeur d'Alene**

Downtown Coeur d'Alene goes big for Independence Day with the American Heroes Parade, activities in City Park, and fireworks over Lake Coeur d'Alene. It's one of the region's largest and most recognizable summer celebrations.

## **CAR D'LANE — Coeur d'Alene**

Hundreds of classic cars take over downtown Coeur d'Alene each June for Car d'Lane. The weekend includes a downtown cruise, vehicle displays, food, and family activities centered along Sherman Avenue.

## **BREWFEST — Coeur d'Alene**

Held each July at McEuen Park, Brewfest features regional craft beers and ciders along with food, yard games, and live music. The lakefront setting makes it a popular summer event in downtown Coeur d'Alene.



#### **DOWNTOWN STREET FAIR — Coeur d'Alene**

More than 250 vendors fill downtown Coeur d'Alene with art, crafts, food, clothing, and handmade goods during this annual three-day summer street fair. It has grown into one of the largest arts-and-crafts weekends in the region.

#### **ART ON THE GREEN — Coeur d'Alene**

Held for more than five decades, Art on the Green brings artists, musicians, food, and hands-on activities to the North Idaho College campus. The 2026 event marks its 58th year and remains one of Coeur d'Alene's best-known summer traditions.

#### **MUSIC AT McEUEEN — Coeur d'Alene**

Free outdoor concerts fill McEuen Park throughout the summer, giving residents and visitors a chance to enjoy live music near the lake. The recurring series features different bands and musical styles throughout the season.

#### **POST FALLS FESTIVAL — Post Falls**

Post Falls' biggest annual community celebration takes place each July at Q'emiln Park. The three-day festival includes live music, food and craft vendors, a parade, family activities, and other entertainment along the Spokane River.

#### **RIVER CITY MARKET & MUSIC — Post Falls**

Summer Wednesday evenings in Post Falls bring together live music, food, local vendors, and small businesses along the river. The recurring market and concert series has become a popular way for families to spend summer evenings outdoors.

#### **HAYDEN DAYS — Hayden**

Held each July at McIntire Family Park, Hayden Days is the city's annual community celebration. The event brings residents together for family activities and entertainment, while the same park also hosts summer concerts throughout July and August.

#### **RATHDRUM DAYS — Rathdrum**

Rathdrum Days is a longstanding summer celebration featuring community activities, vendors, entertainment, and family events. Traditionally held in July, it's one of the signature annual gatherings for the Rathdrum community.

#### **KOOTENAI RIVER DAYS — Bonners Ferry**

Bonnors Ferry's largest summer festival fills downtown with several days of community events, including live music, food, a wine and barley walk, the Kootenai River Run, farmers market activities, kids' entertainment, and local shopping.

#### **PRIEST LAKE TRIATHLON — Priest Lake**

Each August, athletes gather at Priest Lake for this annual sprint triathlon featuring both road-bike and off-road courses. The swim, bike, and run take place against one of North Idaho's most scenic lake and mountain backdrops.

#### **FIREFEST — Priest Lake**

Firefest is an annual lakeside music event held at Elkins Resort on Priest Lake. The summer concert brings live music and community together while raising money to support the West Priest Lake Fire District.



# FALL

## **FALL FEST — Schweitzer**

Held over Labor Day weekend, Schweitzer's annual Fall Fest brings live music, food, mountain activities, and a large selection of regional beer, cider, wine, and non-alcoholic drinks to the village. It's one of North Idaho's biggest end-of-summer traditions and a favorite way to kick off the fall season.

## **LONG BRIDGE HALF MARATHON — Sandpoint**

This annual Sandpoint race takes runners along the shores of Lake Pend Oreille and across the iconic Long Bridge. Half-marathon, 10K, and 5K options make it accessible to a range of runners while showcasing some of Sandpoint's best scenery.

## **HARVEST FESTIVAL — Coeur d'Alene**

Held each October at the Museum of North Idaho, the Harvest Festival includes hayrides, pumpkin painting, live music, food vendors, artisan booths, and family activities. It's a great way to enjoy the season while learning a little more about North Idaho's history.

## **GREEN FARMS & CO. PUMPKIN PATCH — Post Falls**

Green Farms & Co. offers a family-friendly fall farm experience with pumpkins, seasonal produce, and autumn activities. It's an easy way to enjoy a traditional pumpkin-patch outing without leaving the Post Falls area.

## **GRANDPA WOODY'S PUMPKIN PATCH — Rathdrum**

Each fall, Grandpa Woody's Pumpkin Patch offers pumpkins, seasonal treats, and a classic small-farm atmosphere. It's part of the Panhandle Farm Corridor and has become a popular autumn stop for families looking for a traditional pumpkin-patch experience.

## **SCARYWOOD HAUNTED NIGHTS — Athol**

Every October, Silverwood Theme Park transforms into Scarywood, featuring haunted attractions, scare zones, entertainment, and many of the park's signature rides after dark. It has become one of North Idaho's biggest Halloween-season attractions.

## **OKTOBERFEST — Coeur d'Alene**

Downtown Coeur d'Alene celebrates Oktoberfest each September with regional beers and ciders, German-inspired food, live music, and activities throughout participating downtown businesses. The walkable downtown setting makes it one of the area's more popular early-fall events.

## **COEUR D'FONDO — Coeur d'Alene**

This annual September cycling event starts and finishes in downtown Coeur d'Alene and takes riders through the surrounding lake country. Multiple route distances make it accessible to different skill levels while showcasing some of the region's best fall scenery.

## **COEUR D'ALENE LIGHTING CEREMONY & PARADE**

The Friday after Thanksgiving brings one of Coeur d'Alene's biggest annual traditions. Lighted floats travel through downtown before fireworks over the lake and the illumination of the city's extensive holiday light display.



\*\*\* **SCHEDULE A CALL WITH BEN**





# WINTER

## **SANDPOINT WINTER CARNIVAL — Sandpoint**

Sandpoint's Winter Carnival has been a community tradition for more than 50 years. Held each February, the multi-day celebration includes the Parade of Lights, live music, food, family activities, and events throughout downtown Sandpoint.

## **K9 KEG PULL — Sandpoint**

One of the most popular events of Sandpoint's Winter Carnival, the K9 Keg Pull sends dogs racing down a snowy course while pulling appropriately sized kegs or cans. It's quirky, family-friendly, and one of the carnival's signature traditions.

## **POLAR BEAR PLUNGE — Sandpoint**

A daring New Year's tradition, the Polar Bear Plunge invites brave participants to ring in the start of the year by diving into the freezing waters of Lake Pend Oreille. Held every January 1st at the Sandpoint City Beach boat launch.

## **MLK WEEKEND & NORTHERN LIGHTS PARADE — Schweitzer**

Schweitzer celebrates Martin Luther King Jr. weekend with mountain activities highlighted by the annual Northern Lights Parade and fireworks show. A torchlight parade comes down the mountain before fireworks light up the village.

## **SKI WITH SANTA — Schweitzer**

During Christmas week, Santa and Mrs. Claus trade the sleigh for skis at Schweitzer. Families can spot Santa around the mountain, enjoy holiday activities in the village, and take part in the Christmas Eve ski parade.

## **NEW YEAR'S EVE AT SCHWEITZER — Schweitzer**

Schweitzer rings in the new year with a full day on the mountain followed by evening festivities in the village. It's one of the resort's signature holiday celebrations and a popular way to spend New Year's Eve in North Idaho.

## **MEGADEMO DAY — Schweitzer**

MegaDemo Day gives skiers and snowboarders the opportunity to test skis and snowboards from a wide range of brands. The event also supports the Panhandle Alliance for Education, combining time on the mountain with a local cause.

## **JOURNEY TO THE NORTH POLE CRUISES — Coeur d'Alene**

These popular holiday cruises travel across Lake Coeur d'Alene through the Holiday Light Show before arriving at Santa's waterfront North Pole. They typically run from Thanksgiving through the holiday season.

## **HOLIDAY LIGHT SHOW — Coeur d'Alene**

The Coeur d'Alene Resort's annual Holiday Light Show transforms the lakefront with more than 1.5 million lights. The season begins with a parade, lighting ceremony, and fireworks and continues throughout the holidays.

## **MAC & CHEESE FESTIVAL — Coeur d'Alene**

Downtown Coeur d'Alene hosts its annual Mac & Cheese Festival each winter, bringing together local chefs, creative comfort food, craft beverage pairings, and plenty of opportunities to sample and vote for favorites.

## **ELF ON THE SHELF — Downtown Coeur d'Alene**

During the holiday season, Scout Elves hide inside participating downtown businesses as part of a family scavenger hunt. Kids and parents explore downtown while searching for elves and enjoying the Christmas atmosphere.

## **COEUR D'ALENE CHRISTMAS SHOW — Coeur d'Alene**

The Coeur d'Alene Resort hosts an annual Christmas production featuring live music, storytelling, and holiday entertainment. It gives families an indoor option during a season filled with outdoor activities.





#### NEW YEAR'S EVE AT SILVER MOUNTAIN — Kellogg

Silver Mountain Resort hosts New Year's Eve festivities each winter, making it a popular family destination for skiing, snowboarding, lodging, and the resort's indoor waterpark.

#### EXTREME SKI JOR — Wallace

During Presidents Day weekend, downtown Wallace is transformed into a snowy competition course where skiers and snowboarders are pulled behind ATVs while navigating jumps and racing for the fastest time.

#### KIDS SNOW BOWLING & MOUNTAIN BREWFEST —

##### Lookout Pass

This unusual winter event lets kids slide across the snow toward oversized bowling pins while adults enjoy the accompanying mountain brewfest. It's one of Lookout Pass's more playful annual winter traditions.

#### WINTER FREESTYLE EVENTS — Lookout Pass

Lookout Pass hosts recurring freestyle competitions throughout ski season, giving skiers and snowboarders of different ages and ability levels a chance to compete on terrain-park features.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Living in North Idaho puts you within reach of ski areas across Idaho, Washington, Montana, and British Columbia. Beyond Schweitzer, Silver Mountain, and Lookout Pass, nearby options include Mt. Spokane and 49° North in Washington, Whitefish Mountain Resort in Montana, RED Mountain Resort near Rossland, and Whitewater Mountain Resort near Nelson, British Columbia. For a longer weekend getaway, consider the world-class skiing around Banff and Lake Louise in Alberta, Canada.

\*\*\* [CLICK TO VIEW SCHWEITZER HOMES FOR SALE](#)



# LOCAL FAVORITES





# WATER ADVENTURES

Long summer days are best spent on the water. From swimming and paddleboarding to rafting and boating, North Idaho offers endless ways to enjoy summer.

## SANDPOINT CITY BEACH — Sandpoint

Located right downtown on Lake Pend Oreille, City Beach is one of the easiest places to swim, paddleboard, picnic, or spend a summer afternoon. The 22-acre park has sandy beaches, protected swimming areas, playgrounds, sports courts, picnic areas, and a boat launch.

## SAM OWEN CAMPGROUND — HOPE

Located on the Hope Peninsula, Sam Owen offers beaches, swimming, paddling, boating, and easy access to the quieter coves of Lake Pend Oreille. It's especially popular with families and paddlers looking for calmer water.

## ST. JOE RIVER — St. Maries / Avery

The St. Joe is one of North Idaho's premier river-recreation corridors. The upper river offers roughly 30 miles of Class II-IV whitewater during spring runoff, while other sections provide swimming, camping, fishing, and calmer summer recreation. Guided rafting trips are available.

## PRIEST LAKE STATE PARK — Coolin

Priest Lake is one of North Idaho's premier summer destinations, and the state park provides public swimming access along with boating, paddling, camping, and beach recreation surrounded by mountain scenery.

## BOULDER BEACH WATER PARK — Athol

Located inside Silverwood Theme Park, Boulder Beach is North Idaho's major outdoor water park, with wave pools, a lazy river, water slides, and family play areas. It operates daily during the core summer season through Labor Day.



## KOOTENAI RIVER — Bonners Ferry

The Kootenai offers scenic float and fishing trips through some of North Idaho's most remote river country. Guided float trips are a good way to experience the canyon sections where road access is limited.

## COEUR D'ALENE CITY BEACHES — Coeur d'Alene

Multiple public beach areas around the Coeur d'Alene Resort provide several places to swim, paddle, picnic, and relax near downtown and the lakefront trail system. McEuen Park, Fort Sherman Playground, and Independence Point all offer easy access along the Coeur d'Alene lakefront.

## SAND CREEK — Sandpoint

Sand Creek is one of the easiest places in Sandpoint to kayak, canoe, and paddleboard. The protected water is much calmer than the open lake, and paddlers can travel upstream for more than a mile directly from downtown.

### KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN

North Idaho's lakes and rivers are known for their exceptionally clear water. Please pack out what you bring in, respect our beaches and shorelines, and help keep these places beautiful for everyone to enjoy.

### MORE PLACES TO SPLASH

Float the Pack River, Jump off the Pack River Bridge near Northside Elementary, or Popsicle Bridge (Sand Creek). Dover Bay also has a fantastic public swimming area along the Pend Oreille River with a floating dock.

# ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

From historic theaters and intimate concert halls to open-air stages and art spaces, North Idaho is filled with unique venues that bring people together. Each offers its own way to enjoy live entertainment and share in the energy that makes this region shine.

## PANIDA THEATER — Sandpoint

Sandpoint's historic Panida Theater has been a downtown landmark since 1927. It hosts films, concerts, plays, dance performances, community events, and special screenings throughout the year.

## THE HIVE — Sandpoint

Located in downtown Sandpoint, The Hive is one of North Idaho's premier live music and event venues. The intimate concert hall features professional sound and lighting, multiple bars, a mezzanine, and a rotating lineup of touring musicians, local acts, comedy, dancing, and special events.

## WAR MEMORIAL FIELD — Sandpoint

This waterfront venue on Lake Pend Oreille is home to the annual Festival at Sandpoint, bringing nationally recognized musicians and outdoor concerts to Sandpoint each summer.

## BLUE HERON CAFÉ & OUTDOOR STAGE — Sandpoint

Located just north of Sandpoint, the Blue Heron Café combines casual dining with a scenic outdoor patio and live music venue. Its summer concert series features local and regional bands in a relaxed backyard setting with mountain and lake views.

## PEARL'S ON THE LAKE — Hope

Located at Beyond Hope Resort on the shores of Lake Pend Oreille, Pearl's on the Lake combines waterfront dining with recurring live music throughout the summer. The relaxed lakeside setting, rotating seasonal menu, and regular local and regional performers make it a popular destination for dinner, drinks, and entertainment on the water.

## ICCU AMPHITHEATER AT RIVERSTONE — Coeur d'Alene

The outdoor amphitheater at Riverstone Park hosts free summer concerts featuring local and regional musicians in a relaxed, family-friendly setting.



\*\*\* [CLICK TO VIEW HOMES FOR SALE IN SANDPOINT](#)



A treasure trove of experiences awaits, promising fun for everyone. Whether you are with friends, on a date night, or creating memories as a family, there are countless ways to explore, laugh, and connect. From outdoor escapes to creative indoor spaces, there is something for every age and every season.

#### **SILVERWOOD THEME PARK — Athol**

North Idaho's major theme park destination features roller coasters, family rides, live entertainment, and Boulder Beach Water Park. It's one of the region's biggest summer attractions and offers enough variety for both younger kids and thrill seekers.

#### **TRIPLE PLAY FAMILY FUN PARK — Hayden**

A huge year-round family entertainment complex with bowling, laser tag, go-karts, bumper cars, mini golf, a ropes course, arcade games, indoor water park, and more. It's one of the strongest indoor family-fun options in North Idaho.

#### **BIG FLIPPER — Coeur d'Alene**

A newer Coeur d'Alene arcade centered around classic and modern pinball machines. The locally owned venue offers all-ages hours during the day, giving families another indoor entertainment option beyond traditional bowling and movie theaters.

#### **TIMBERLINE ADVENTURES — Coeur d'Alene**

Timberline Adventures offers one of the most substantial zipline experiences in the region, with seven ziplines, two sky bridges, and two auto-belays through forested terrain above Coeur d'Alene. The company describes itself as Coeur d'Alene's top-rated outdoor adventure.

#### **SILVER RAPIDS INDOOR WATERPARK — Kellogg**

Located at Silver Mountain Resort, this indoor water park gives families another year-round option when outdoor weather isn't cooperating. It pairs especially well with a ski weekend or overnight trip to the Silver Valley.

#### **CRYSTAL GOLD MINE — Kellogg**

Families can take a guided underground tour through an authentic 1880s gold mine and learn about the region's mining history firsthand. It's another hands-on way to experience the Silver Valley rather than simply reading about it in a museum.

#### **ROUTE OF THE HIAWATHA — Lookout Pass**

One of the region's most memorable family adventures, the Route of the Hiawatha takes cyclists through historic railroad tunnels and across towering trestles in the mountains along the Idaho-Montana border. Visit Idaho highlights it as one of Northern Idaho's signature recreation experiences.

#### **MOUNTAIN HORSE ADVENTURES — Schweitzer**

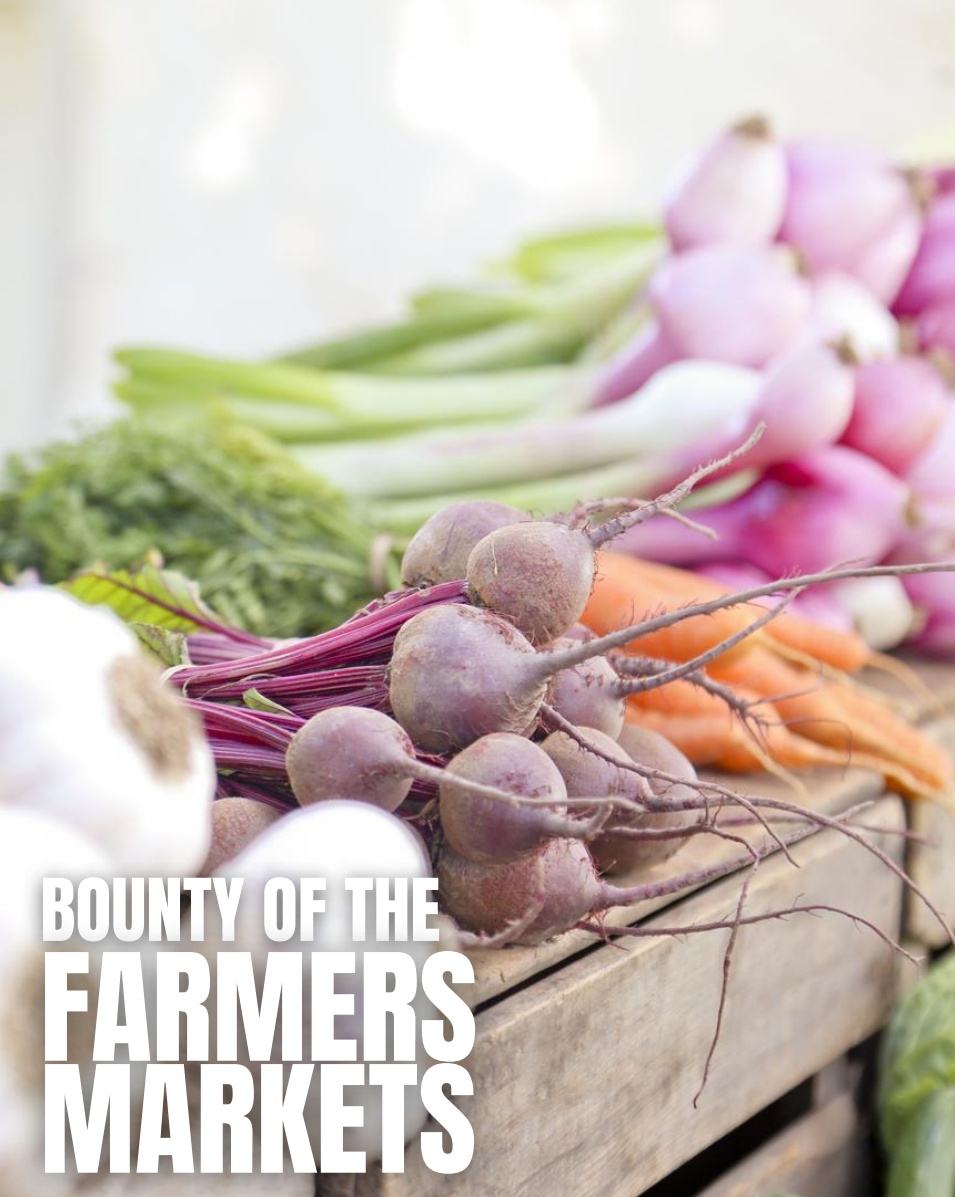
Guided horseback rides leave from Schweitzer Village and travel through forested mountain trails with views overlooking Lake Pend Oreille. Rides are designed for different experience levels and are available during the summer season.

#### **WESTERN PLEASURE GUEST RANCH — Sandpoint**

Guided trail riding along with lessons, longer day rides, and specialty experiences such as rides to Grouse Creek Falls. It's another strong option for people looking for a more traditional North Idaho ranch experience.

#### **EMERALD CREEK GARNET AREA — Near Clarkia / St. Maries**

Families can actually dig for their own Idaho star garnets at this U.S. Forest Service recreation site in the Idaho Panhandle. Star garnets are Idaho's state gem, and gem-quality deposits are famously rare — Visit Idaho notes they are found in significant quantities only in Idaho and India. Visitors sift through material, search for garnets, and can keep a limited amount of what they find.



# BOUNTY OF THE FARMERS MARKETS



Fresh food and friendly faces fill the markets across North Idaho each week, bringing together local growers, makers, and neighbors. These open-air gatherings are the heart of community life and are places to shop, taste, and celebrate Idaho's harvest season.

## **SANDPOINT FARMERS MARKET — Sandpoint**

Held at Farmin Park in downtown Sandpoint, this long-running market features local produce, baked goods, flowers, meats, artisan products, and handmade goods. The 2026 season runs on Wednesdays and Saturdays into October.

## **KOOTENAI COUNTY FARMERS MARKET — Hayden**

Serving North Idaho since 1986, the Saturday market in Hayden offers locally grown produce, plants, meats, cheeses, breads, honey, jams, and artisan goods. It operates from May through October.

\*\*\* SCHEDULE A CALL WITH BEN

## **KOOTENAI COUNTY FARMERS MARKET AT RIVERSTONE — Coeur d'Alene**

Held on Wednesday evenings at Riverstone, this market brings local growers, food producers, and artisans together from May through September. It's a convenient evening market surrounded by Riverstone's restaurants, trails, and shops.

## **5TH STREET FARMERS MARKET — DOWNTOWN Coeur d'Alene**

Located just off Sherman Avenue, this Wednesday market features fresh produce, flowers, pastries, local art, live music, and other regional products in the heart of downtown Coeur d'Alene.

## **BONNERS FERRY FARMERS MARKET — Bonners Ferry**

One of the oldest farmers markets in the Idaho Panhandle, the Bonners Ferry market has been operating since 1980. Local growers, food producers, and craftspeople gather downtown on Saturdays from late April into early October.

## **POST FALLS PUBLIC MARKET — Post Falls**

A community public market combining farmers-market vendors, local makers, flea-market finds, and specialty goods. The market is located at 415 E 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.



# GROCERY STORES



North Idaho offers a good mix of traditional grocery stores, natural-food markets, discount grocers, and warehouse shopping. Sandpoint and Ponderay cover most everyday needs with stores like Yoke's, Safeway, Super 1 Foods, Walmart, and locally owned natural-food options. For a broader selection, residents often head south to Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls, where you'll find Costco, Trader Joe's, WinCo, Fred Meyer, Natural Grocers, and additional national retailers.

## LOCAL FAVORITES

### YOKE'S FRESH MARKET

A regional grocery chain with a location in Ponderay offering fresh produce, meat and seafood, bakery items, deli foods, and everyday groceries.

### SUPER 1 FOODS

A familiar North Idaho grocery option carrying produce, meat and seafood, bakery and deli items, pantry staples, and household essentials.

### SAFEWAY

A full-service grocery store with a Sandpoint location offering groceries, pharmacy services, pickup, and delivery.

### FRED MEYER

Located in Coeur d'Alene, Fred Meyer combines a full grocery store with household goods, apparel, pharmacy services, and other departments.

## NATURAL & SPECIALTY MARKETS

### WINTER RIDGE NATURAL FOODS — Sandpoint

A locally owned natural-food market specializing in organic produce, natural and organic meats, bulk foods, supplements, and a deli, along with an organic coffee and juice bar.

### THE GRANARY — Sandpoint

The Granary General Store blends a neighborhood market, bakery, café, and specialty grocery shop in one space. Shelves and counters feature fresh sourdough and focaccia, pastries, sandwiches, cured meats, cheeses, jams, mustards, nut butters, frozen take-home meals, locally roasted coffee, beer, wine, and other carefully selected pantry goods.

### TRADER JOE'S — Coeur d'Alene

Known for its private-label products, specialty foods, frozen meals, snacks, produce, and rotating seasonal items. Coeur d'Alene is home to North Idaho's Trader Joe's location.

## DISCOUNT & BULK RETAILERS

### COSTCO WHOLESALE — Coeur d'Alene

A membership warehouse offering groceries, fresh produce, meat, bakery and deli items, household products, and bulk-sized goods.

### WINCO FOODS — Coeur d'Alene

An employee-owned discount supermarket known for competitive pricing, a large bulk-food department, and a broad selection of everyday groceries. The Coeur d'Alene store is open 24 hours.



# SIP AND SAVOR COFFEE CULTURE

North Idaho is certainly not short on coffee options or roadside espresso stands. From locally roasted specialty coffee and cozy downtown cafés to quick drive-through stands that seem to pop up around nearly every corner, grabbing a good cup of coffee is easy throughout the region. Sandpoint and Coeur d'Alene have especially strong café scenes, while Post Falls, Hayden, and the surrounding communities add plenty of locally owned favorites of their own.

## **EVANS BROTHERS COFFEE — Sandpoint**

A Sandpoint-born specialty coffee roaster located in the Granary Arts District. Evans Brothers Coffee pairs award-winning craft coffee with pastries, breakfast options, local art, and an inviting café atmosphere.

## **THE BERNKLAU — Sandpoint**

The Bernklau is a European-style café and bakery in downtown Sandpoint known for sweet and savory crêpes, espresso drinks, pastries, and a polished but relaxed atmosphere.

## **NORTHERN GRIND — Sandpoint**

A small locally owned downtown coffee stop, Northern Grind is especially convenient for a quick latte, mocha, or espresso while exploring downtown or visiting the nearby farmers market.

## **PANEAH'S BISTRO — Sandpoint**

Located inside the Cedar Street Bridge, Paneah's Bistro combines coffee with breakfast, brunch, baked goods, and casual lunches in one of downtown Sandpoint's most recognizable locations.

## **CITY BEACH ORGANICS — Sandpoint**

City Beach Organics offers organic breakfast and lunch options alongside espresso, chai, matcha, smoothies, and juices in a bright downtown café near the waterfront.

## **MARIGOLD BISTRO — Sandpoint**

Marigold Bistro is a locally rooted breakfast-and-lunch café serving coffee, pastries, sandwiches, salads, and other casual fare in downtown Sandpoint.

## **DI LUNA'S CAFÉ — Sandpoint**

A longtime Sandpoint café known for locally sourced ingredients, eclectic regional cuisine, breakfast and lunch, and a warm neighborhood atmosphere. Di Luna's also hosts wine tastings and special events, making it a longtime gathering place for locals and visitors.

## **JITTERZ ESPRESSO — Sandpoint**

A locally owned North Idaho drive-through coffee stand serving handcrafted espresso drinks, teas, energy drinks, and quick grab-and-go options. Jitterz has grown to multiple locations across the region, and its Sandpoint stand offers a convenient stop for coffee on the way to work, school, or a day around town.

## **VAULT COFFEE — Coeur d'Alene**

Set inside a historic former bank building on Sherman Avenue, Vault Coffee serves specialty coffee, espresso, tea, and café-style food in the heart of downtown Coeur d'Alene.

## **UNION ROASTERS — Coeur d'Alene**

Union Roasters focuses on craft coffee and well-made espresso drinks, with a modern café atmosphere and a menu that also includes waffles, breakfast items, tea, and matcha.

## **SEBASTIAN'S COFFEE & PASTRIES — Coeur d'Alene**

Sebastian's Coffee & Pastries combines house-roasted coffee with scratch-made pastries, breads, breakfast sandwiches, and an in-house chai program.

# SUGAR & SPICE LOCAL TREATS



North Idaho has no shortage of places to satisfy a sweet tooth. From handcrafted ice cream and fresh-baked pastries to old-fashioned candy shops, pies, gelato, and locally made desserts, there are plenty of stops worth seeking out. Sandpoint has several standout local favorites, while Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls add even more variety for a weekend treat or family outing.

## ICE CREAM & SWEET TREATS

### PANHANDLE CONE & COFFEE — Sandpoint

Born in Sandpoint, Panhandle Cone & Coffee specializes in handcrafted ice cream made with creative flavors and quality ingredients, along with espresso and baked goods. It has grown from a family passion for homemade ice cream into one of downtown Sandpoint's favorite sweet stops.

### SUGAR TOOTH — Sandpoint

A locally owned sweet shop in downtown Sandpoint offering house-made chocolates, caramels, candy apples, fudge, brittles, truffles, and other confections. Sugar Tooth also carries a fun assortment of nostalgic and trending candy, making it an easy stop for both kids and adults.

### GELATO BY THE LAKE — Coeur d'Alene

Located on Sherman Avenue downtown, Gelato by the Lake makes its gelato fresh in Coeur d'Alene and offers a rotating variety of flavors, including dairy-free and gluten-free options.

### HONEYPEEPS SWEET SHOP — Coeur d'Alene

An old-fashioned candy-shop experience filled with nostalgic sweets, chocolates, candy, and ice cream. It's the kind of place that feels designed to make adults and kids alike feel like they've stepped into a classic candy store.

### SEA SALT CREAMERY + BAKESHOP — Coeur d'Alene

A family-owned dessert shop specializing in small-batch handmade ice cream and baked goods made fresh daily. Its focus is simple ingredients, creative flavors, and classic treats made from scratch.

### DOCKSIDE GOOEYS — Coeur d'Alene

Served at Dockside inside The Coeur d'Alene Resort, Gooeys are oversized signature sundaes piled with ice cream, sauces, candy, and other toppings. Flavors include creations built around favorites like Butterfinger and Reese's, and they've become a longtime Resort tradition that's especially fun to share with family or visiting guests.

## BAKERIES, PIES & PASTRIES

### THE CAKERY ON FIRST — Sandpoint

A specialty cake shop in downtown Sandpoint focused on cakes and celebration desserts. Even Bluebird Bakery directs customers looking for cakes to The Cakery, making it a useful local option for birthdays and special occasions.

### THE PIE HUT — Sandpoint

A cozy local café known for its homemade pies, soups, quiche, sandwiches, and comfort food. The Pie Hut has built a loyal following for generous slices of freshly made pie, with favorites ranging from fruit pies to cream varieties and seasonal flavors.

### CICCARELLI'S — Coeur d'Alene

Family-owned and operated, specializing in desserts made from scratch. Enjoy eclairs, pies, cakes, tortes, cheesecake, and cannolis!



# CRAFTED COCKTAILS

North Idaho's cocktail scene blends polished lounges, historic watering holes, rooftop views, and locally driven restaurants. Sandpoint offers a smaller but distinctive collection of places to grab a well-made drink, while Coeur d'Alene adds more upscale lounges and late-night options. From lakefront cocktails to whiskey bars and mountain-top drinks, there are plenty of places to settle in for an evening out.

## **BARREL 33 — Sandpoint**

A downtown wine bar and eatery offering wine, beer, cider tastings, elevated handmade cocktails, and thoughtfully paired small bites.

## **THE BANK — Sandpoint**

Located downtown on First Avenue, The Bank pairs handcrafted cocktails with an elevated food menu in a stylish, intimate setting. Opened in 2022, it features a cozy interior, seasonal patio overlooking the marina, and a private Copper Room for events.

## **113 MAIN — Sandpoint**

A downtown restaurant and bar known for elevated dining, handcrafted cocktails, and a polished but approachable atmosphere. Their current menu and site clearly emphasize specialty drinks.

## **THE DISTRICT BISTRO & WINE SHOP — Sandpoint**

Located in downtown Sandpoint, The District combines a bistro, cocktail bar, and curated wine shop in one stylish setting. Guests can enjoy creative cocktails, wine by the glass or bottle, lunch and dinner, and seasonal patio seating.

## **THE NEST — Schweitzer**

Located inside Sky House at the summit of Schweitzer, The Nest pairs cocktails and seasonal small plates with panoramic mountain and Lake Pend Oreille views.

## **WHISPERS LOUNGE — Coeur d'Alene**

A waterfront lounge at The Coeur d'Alene Resort known for specialty cocktails and creative twists on classics, with indoor and outdoor seating, fire pits, and sweeping lake views.

## **LA CONDESA — Coeur d'Alene**

A stylish downtown cocktail lounge serving high-end cocktails with a Latin influence. It stays open late and offers a more polished nightlife option in the heart of Coeur d'Alene.

## **STYLUS WINE & VINYL BAR — Coeur d'Alene**

A distinctive wine-and-music bar pairing an extensive wine list with thousands of vinyl records and French- and Pacific Northwest-inspired food. Food & Wine named it one of the 10 best wine bars in the U.S. for 2026.

## **BARDENAY RESTAURANT & DISTILLERY — Coeur d'Alene**

Located at Riverstone, Bardenay is known for handcrafted cocktails made with spirits from its own distillery. It pairs those drinks with a full lunch, dinner, and brunch menu in a polished but casual setting.



# LOCAL BREWERIES



North Idaho has built a thriving craft beer culture, with independent breweries and microbreweries spread from Sandpoint to Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Hayden, and the Silver Valley. Many of these breweries are community gathering places as much as taprooms, offering food, patios, live music, trivia, and seasonal releases alongside locally crafted beers.

## **MATCHWOOD BREWING CO. — Sandpoint**

Sandpoint's neighborhood brewery and eatery serves handcrafted beer in the Granary Arts District. Matchwood puts a strong emphasis on community, conversation, food, and locally brewed beer in a relaxed gathering space.

## **MICKDUFF'S BREWING COMPANY — Sandpoint**

A longtime Sandpoint craft brewery known for handcrafted ales and a family-friendly pub atmosphere. MickDuff's also operates its Beer Hall & Brewery on Cedar Street, where its unfiltered, non-pasteurized "Naturally North Ales" are brewed and served.

## **UTARA BREWING COMPANY — Sandpoint**

A locally owned, award-winning craft brewery producing small-batch beer on a seven-barrel brewhouse. Utara offers everything from crisp lagers and hop-forward IPAs to rotating seasonal releases, with both a downtown Pub on Pine and a brewery location on Boyer.

## **DAFT BADGER BREWING — Coeur d'Alene**

A locally owned brewery and pub offering a broad range of beer styles, from hop-forward IPAs to darker seasonal releases, along with a full food menu and rotating small-batch brews.

## **SLATE CREEK BREWING — Coeur d'Alene**

A small-batch brewery with indoor and outdoor gathering space, handcrafted beer, games, and live music. It has developed a loyal local following and a casual neighborhood atmosphere.

## **TRICKSTER'S BREWING CO. — Coeur d'Alene**

A North Idaho craft brewery producing locally brewed ales from its Coeur d'Alene taproom. Trickster's has been part of the area's independent brewery scene for years and is one of several breweries clustered around the city.

## **VANTAGE POINT BREWING CO. — Coeur d'Alene**

A locally owned brewery near Lake Coeur d'Alene offering house-brewed beer, food, and community events. The brewery regularly hosts gatherings, special events, and entertainment alongside its rotating beer lineup.

## **TRAILS END BREWERY — Coeur d'Alene**

A locally owned brewery and taproom serving handcrafted beer in north Coeur d'Alene. It adds another option to the city's growing collection of neighborhood-style craft breweries.

## **MAD BOMBER BREWING — Hayden**

Founded by U.S. Army veterans, Mad Bomber Brewing combines locally brewed craft beer with a military-inspired identity. The Hayden brewery grew from the founders' shared military experience and remains one of the more distinctive breweries in the region.



# LOCAL SKI RESORTS



## IDAHO:

### SCHWEITZER MOUNTAIN

Located right in Sandpoint, this is the region's top ski resort. It is one of the largest ski resorts in North America, with over 2,900 acres of lift-serviced terrain, 92 ski trails, and open-bowl skiing. In the summer, you can hike, bike, pick huckleberries, and attend all the festivals.

### SILVER MOUNTAIN

Located in Kellogg, Idaho, and only 35 miles away from Coeur d'Alene. There is a 3.1-mile gondola ride that offers skiers and mountain bikers access to a large skiable area with a significant vertical drop of 2,200 feet. The resort also offer Idaho's biggest indoor waterpark, "Silver Rapids," making it a year-round destination with diverse activities.

### LOOKOUT PASS SKI RESORT

At the boarder of Idaho and Montana, 56 miles from Coeur d'Alene, you will find this fun and scenic ski resort. With 34 runs, 4 chair lifts, and 540 acres, this mountain is perfect for a day of fun.



## NEARBY:

### MT. SPOKANE SKI & SNOWBOARD PARK

Located just across the Washington border, Mt. Spokane offers 1,704 skiable acres, 53 designated runs, and 2,000 feet of vertical. It also offers night skiing on select runs, making it a practical option for an evening or day trip from the Coeur d'Alene area.

### 49° NORTH MOUNTAIN RESORT

Located near Chewelah, Washington, 49° North offers more than 2,300 acres of lift-served terrain and 90 marked trails spread across multiple peaks and basins. Its mix of groomed runs, moguls, tree skiing, and terrain parks gives North Idaho residents another substantial mountain within the broader region.

### RED MOUNTAIN RESORT — ROSSLAND, BC

Just across the Canadian border in Rossland, RED Mountain offers 3,850 skiable acres across five peaks with nearly 3,000 feet of vertical. Known for deep snow, extensive tree skiing, groomers, and in-bounds cat skiing, it makes for an easy destination when you want to turn a ski day into a weekend getaway.



\*\*\* [CLICK TO VIEW SCHWEITZER HOMES FOR SALE](#)



# ENDLESS GOLF COURSES

With long summer days, mountain views, lakefront scenery, and courses ranging from relaxed public tracks to nationally recognized resort golf, North Idaho offers plenty for golfers of every skill level. Sandpoint, Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Hayden, Priest River, and the Silver Valley all have courses worth exploring, with several offering scenery that feels distinctly North Idaho.

## SANDPOINT

### THE IDAHO CLUB

Just outside Sandpoint, The Idaho Club features the only Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course in Idaho. The 18-hole championship course winds through forests, wetlands, and along the Lower Pack River, with striking mountain views throughout.

### SANDPOINT ELKS GOLF COURSE

A more relaxed local option, the Sandpoint Elks course welcomes both members and non-members and offers affordable 9- and 18-hole play just east of town.

## BLANCHARD

### STONERIDGE GOLF COURSE

Located in Blanchard on the back side of Mt. Spokane, StoneRidge combines golf with a larger recreational community. Its mountain setting and quieter atmosphere make it a popular option between Sandpoint and the Spokane/Coeur d'Alene corridor.

## COEUR D'ALENE

### COEUR D'ALENE RESORT GOLF COURSE

One of North Idaho's most recognizable courses, the Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course is home to the famous **14th-hole Floating Green, the world's first movable floating island green.** Lake Coeur d'Alene views are incorporated throughout the course.

## HAYDEN

### AVONDALE GOLF COURSE

Set among mature North Idaho pines near Hayden Lake, Avondale is a privately owned course that is open to the public. The par-72 layout is designed to be enjoyable for recreational golfers while still challenging experienced players.

## POST FALLS

### PRAIRIE FALLS GOLF CLUB

Prairie Falls is a family-friendly par-70 course surrounded by mountain views, streams, and waterfalls. Its approachable layout makes it a good option for golfers with a range of skill levels.

## PRIEST LAKE

### PRIEST LAKE GOLF COURSE

Located just minutes from the lake, Priest Lake Golf Course is a public 18-hole, par-72 championship course surrounded by mountains, forest, wetlands, ponds, and rolling terrain. The course stretches more than 6,200 yards from the championship tees and is designed to accommodate golfers of different skill levels.



North Idaho makes it easy to get outside, whether you're looking for a casual waterfront walk or a challenging mountain hike. Around Sandpoint alone, there are more than 200 trails within about an hour of town, with options ranging from paved paths and family-friendly forest trails to steep climbs overlooking Lake Pend Oreille. Coeur d'Alene adds even more variety, with lakefront loops and mountain trail systems just minutes from town.

### PEND OREILLE BAY TRAIL — Sandpoint

One of Sandpoint's favorite walking trails follows the shoreline of Lake Pend Oreille just north of City Beach. The mostly flat, unpaved trail stretches roughly 1.7 miles one way and offers continuous lake views, shade, and easy access for walking, jogging, and biking.

### SAND CREEK TRAIL — Sandpoint

This paved multi-use trail begins near City Beach and follows Sand Creek north through Sandpoint toward Ponderay. The relatively flat route is popular for walking, jogging, biking, and an easy outing close to downtown.

### MICKINNICK TRAIL — Sandpoint

For something more challenging, Mickinnick climbs more than 2,000 feet over 3.5 miles to a rocky overlook above Sandpoint. The 7-mile round trip rewards hikers with expansive views of Lake Pend Oreille, the Long Bridge, Cabinet Mountains, and surrounding valleys.

### PINE STREET WOODS — Sandpoint

Located just a few minutes from downtown, Pine Street Woods offers a network of forested trails designed for a wide variety of users. Wide, accessible paths make it especially good for families, casual walks, strollers, and people looking for an easy way to spend time outside.

### GOLD HILL TRAIL — Sagle

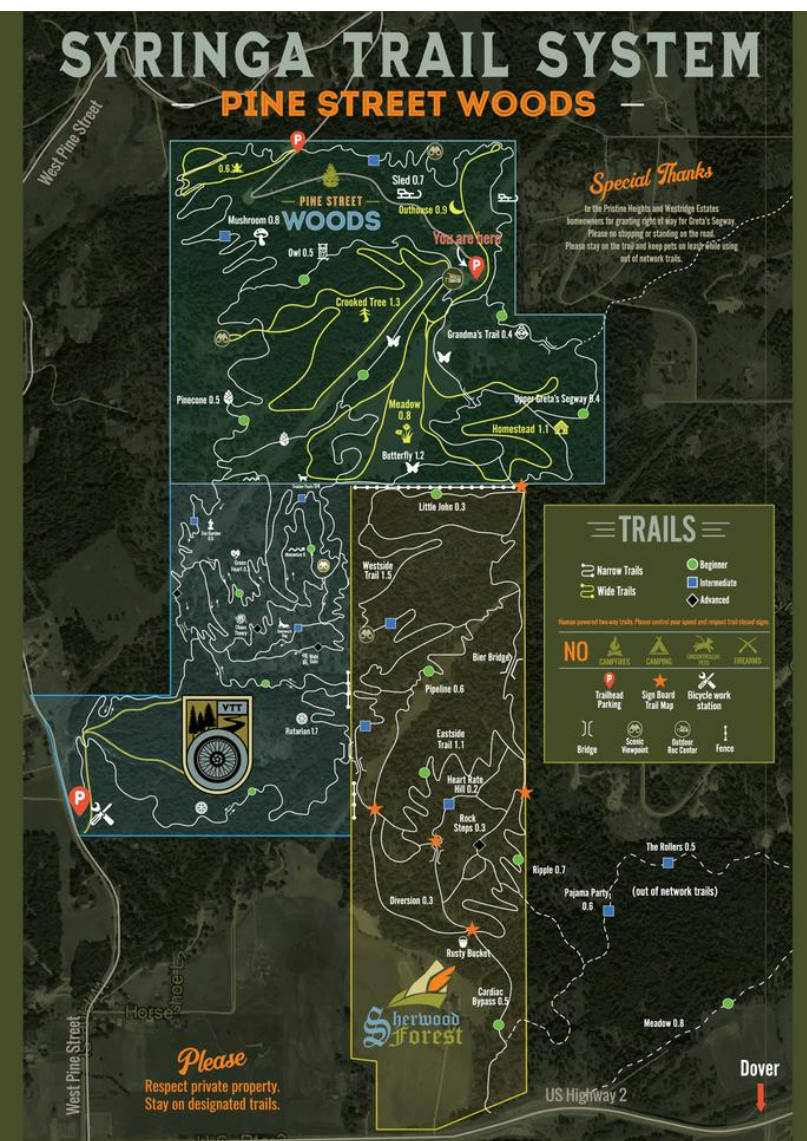
Gold Hill is one of the area's most popular hiking and mountain biking trails. The roughly 3.7-mile route climbs through forest before opening to panoramic views across Lake Pend Oreille toward Sandpoint and the Selkirk Mountains.

### TUBBS HILL — Coeur d'Alene

Right next to downtown Coeur d'Alene, Tubbs Hill is a 165-acre natural area surrounded by Lake Coeur d'Alene. Its popular 2.2-mile perimeter trail winds through forest, rocky shoreline, overlooks, and small swimming coves, making it one of the city's signature outdoor spaces.

### CANFIELD MOUNTAIN TRAIL SYSTEM — Coeur d'Alene

Canfield Mountain offers an extensive network of wooded trails just outside Coeur d'Alene. Hikers share the system with mountain bikers and, on designated routes, motorized users, with multiple options for everything from shorter forest walks to longer climbs and viewpoints.



# PARKS & SPORT COMPLEXES





# FIELD OF DREAMS

Field of Dreams is a **50-acre regional sports and recreation complex** in Ponderay, Idaho, that has been decades in the making. What started as a long-term vision for expanded community recreation is now becoming one of the most important youth sports and family gathering spaces in the Sandpoint area.

Phase 1 opened with **four fully lit artificial-turf fields** designed to support a wide range of sports and age groups. The fields can be configured for youth play, high school competition, and full-size adult use, giving local teams a dedicated place for practices, games, tournaments, camps, and community events. Soccer, lacrosse, football, and other field sports can all make use of the complex, helping expand recreation opportunities for families throughout Bonner County.

The artificial-turf design is especially valuable in North Idaho, where long winters, spring moisture, and changing weather can make traditional grass fields difficult to maintain and limit when they can be used. A more durable playing surface **helps extend the season** and gives local programs a more reliable place to practice and compete.

The complex also includes supporting amenities such as parking, restrooms, concessions, and infrastructure designed to accommodate larger events. This gives the site the ability to serve not only local leagues, but also tournaments and gatherings that can bring families and visitors into the area.

Future phases are planned to continue expanding the recreation opportunities at the site. As those improvements are completed, Field of Dreams is expected to become an even larger community hub for youth athletics, outdoor recreation, and family activities.

Looking ahead, the master plan calls for additional recreation amenities that could include tennis and pickleball courts, baseball and softball facilities, batting cages, sand volleyball courts, multi-use trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, a field house and event center, **an indoor pool, and an ice skating rink**. The Pond community ice rink is already operating in Ponderay, giving the area a dedicated winter skating and hockey option while the broader Field of Dreams vision continues to develop.

Located just minutes from Sandpoint, Field of Dreams adds another layer to the quality of life in the area and gives local families a dedicated place to play, compete, gather, and grow.

*Ponderay, Idaho*

# TRIVERS PARK



The Travers Park complex and the James E. Russell Sports Center have become one of Sandpoint's biggest investments in year-round recreation. Located on Pine Street, the 37,000-square-foot sports center opened as part of a broader redevelopment of Travers Park and gives the community a dedicated indoor space for court sports regardless of the season.

Inside, the James E. Russell Sports Center offers four indoor tennis courts and 14 indoor pickleball courts, along with a free indoor walking loop around the courts. The facility gives residents a valuable option during North Idaho's long winters and provides space for lessons, leagues, drop-in play, tournaments, and other recreation programming throughout the year.

The improvements extend well beyond the sports center. Travers Park now includes a 15,000-square-foot inclusive playground and splash pad designed so children of different ages and abilities can play together. The new recreation area includes more than 20 routes of play and has quickly become one of Sandpoint's most popular family destinations during the warmer months.

A new picnic gazebo near the playground and splash pad adds another gathering space for birthday parties, family outings, and community events. The gazebo can be reserved through Sandpoint Parks and Recreation and helps make Travers Park a place where families can spend much more than just an hour at the playground.

The Concrete Lake Skatepark also received a major expansion as part of the broader improvements. Completed in 2024, the project effectively doubled the original skatepark footprint to more than 14,000 square feet and added new terrain designed for skateboards, scooters, bicycles, rollerblades, and other wheeled users. The upgraded park also added lighting, spectator areas, and shade improvements, making it a much more complete action-sports facility.

*Sandpoint, Idaho*

\*\*\* [CLICK TO VIEW HOMES FOR SALE IN SANDPOINT](#)



# JAMES E RUSSELL SPORTS COMPLEX

Young riders also have the Tiny Wood Bicycle Skills Course, which was refreshed in 2024 with help from the Pend Oreille Pedalers. Together with the skatepark, playground, splash pad, and sports center, it gives Travers Park recreation options for a wide range of ages and interests.

What makes the area even more useful is that Travers Park does not stand alone. Travers Park, Centennial Field, and Great Northern Park function together as one larger recreation corridor, with pedestrian and bicycle paths connecting the parks. Centennial Field sits directly north of Travers, while Great Northern continues the sports complex farther north with additional football, lacrosse, and open-field space. The city has also completed a pathway connection between Great Northern and Centennial, making it easier to walk or bike through the entire park system.

Together, the James E. Russell Sports Center, Travers Park, Centennial Field, and Great Northern Park create one of Sandpoint's most complete recreation areas. Families can move between indoor court sports, playgrounds, water play, skating, biking, walking, soccer, football, lacrosse, and open green space, all within the same connected part of town.

## LAKEVIEW PARK

Lakeview Park is a 12-acre community park located along the Lake Pend Oreille waterfront near War Memorial Field. It offers a quieter, more relaxed recreation setting than some of Sandpoint's larger sports complexes, with mature trees, open green space, walking paths, picnic areas, and lake views.

The park is also home to the Bonner County Historical Museum and the Native Plant Arboretum, giving visitors a mix of recreation, local history, and education in one location. Families can also take advantage of the playground, picnic shelter, and seasonal boat access, while the park's pathways make it an easy place for a casual walk or bike ride.

Lakeview Park also includes a multi-use pickleball and basketball court, adding another active recreation option. The court is generally available on a first-come, first-served basis when it is not reserved for organized programs or special events.

Because of its location near downtown and the boat launch, Lakeview Park works equally well for a quick afternoon visit, a family picnic, a walk through the arboretum, or a stop at the museum. It adds another layer to Sandpoint's park system by blending open space, recreation, lake access, and local history in one easy-to-reach setting.



# DISCOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Education in North Idaho is built on connection, quality, and opportunity. From innovative public schools to strong private programs, families have access to learning environments that meet every stage of growth from Pre-K through high school.

Smaller class sizes, dedicated teachers, and a focus on technology and enrichment help students thrive. Combined with a supportive community and commitment to academic excellence, North Idaho offers an educational experience that prepares students for the future with confidence and curiosity.

## LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

### LAKE PEND OREILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT #84

365 N. Triangle Drive, Ponderay, ID 83852  
208-263-2184

*7 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 3 high schools*

### WEST BONNER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #83

134 Main Street, Priest River, ID 83856  
208-448-4439

*3 elementary schools, 1 middle schools, 1 high schools*

### COEUR D'ALENE SCHOOL DISTRICT #271

1400 N. Northwood Center Ct., Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
208-664-824

*10 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 high schools*

### LAKELAND JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT #272

15506 N. Washington St., Rathdrum, ID 83858  
208-687-043

*6 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 high schools*

### POST FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT #273

206 W. Mullan Ave., Post Falls, ID 83854  
208-773-1658

*7 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 2 high schools*

### KOOTENAI JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT #274

13030 E. O'Gara Road, Harrison, ID 83833  
208-689-3631

*1 elementary schools, 1 middle schools, 1 high schools*

### BOUNDARY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #101

6770 Augusta Street, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805  
208-267-3146

*3 elementary schools, 1 middle schools, 1 high schools*



# FLEXIBLE EDUCATION WITH HOMESCHOOL

Homeschooling in Idaho offers families exceptional flexibility and freedom to shape an education that reflects their child's interests, pace, and goals.

With no state requirements for notification, curriculum, or testing, families have complete control over how and what their children learn. This independence allows every homeschool experience to be as creative and individualized as the students themselves.

Although the law imposes minimal oversight, many families choose to record attendance, curriculum, and student work to ease transitions or satisfy other state regulations. Homeschooled students in Idaho may also participate in public school courses, sports, or extracurricular activities depending on their local district's policies.

Whether you're just beginning to explore homeschooling or looking to expand your existing program, Idaho's environment offers freedom, opportunity, and support to create a learning journey that works for you and your family.

Source: Idaho Department of Education

# FOCUSED OPTIONS WITH PRIVATE SCHOOL

Private schools in North Idaho offer families a range of educational paths, from faith-based institutions to independent academies. Each provides an environment where students are challenged, supported, and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Smaller class sizes and close teacher relationships foster strong academics and personal growth, while programs in the arts, athletics, and leadership help students build confidence beyond the classroom.



## PRIVATE SCHOOL NUMBERS:

BONNERS FERRY - 3

SANDPOINT - 5

COEUR D'ALENE - 10

HAYDEN - 2

SAGLE - 1

RATHDRUM - 2

POST FALLS - 8



# CARING FOR YOU: HEALTHCARE IN NORTH IDAHO

## **BONNER GENERAL HEALTH — Sandpoint**

Bonner General Health is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital serving Sandpoint and the surrounding North Idaho region. Its hospital and outpatient network provides emergency care, diagnostic imaging, rehabilitation, immediate care, women's health, specialty clinics, and other medical services.

For many everyday and urgent healthcare needs, Bonner General allows Sandpoint residents to receive care close to home without traveling south. The hospital is also designated as a Level IV Trauma Center through Idaho's Time Sensitive Emergency system.

## **KOOTENAI HEALTH — Coeur d'Alene**

Kootenai Health is the largest hospital system in North Idaho and serves patients throughout the Inland Northwest. Its main Coeur d'Alene campus includes a 381-bed hospital and more than 20 specialized Kootenai Clinic physician practices.

Kootenai Health provides a broad range of specialty and advanced care and is an American College of Surgeons-verified Level II Trauma Center. For Sandpoint-area residents who need more complex specialty, surgical, or trauma care, Coeur d'Alene is an important regional healthcare hub.

## **7B-IV WELLNESS CENTER — Sandpoint**

A local functional medicine and holistic health clinic administering IV therapies, halo, ozone insufflation, red light bed, infrared sauna, longevity ozone pod, respiratory breathing therapies, and hormone replacement.

## **GOOD TO KNOW**

Healthcare options in North Idaho vary depending on where you live. Sandpoint, Bonners Ferry, Kellogg, and other smaller communities have local hospitals and clinics for many everyday and emergency needs, while Coeur d'Alene serves as the region's primary hub for more advanced specialty and trauma care.

Residents needing services beyond what is available locally may also travel to Spokane, where Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center & Children's Hospital provides a broad range of advanced and specialty care.

For residents closer to the Washington border, Newport Community Hospital in Newport, Washington is another nearby option. It is a Critical Access Hospital and Level IV Trauma Center offering 24-hour emergency services along with diagnostic imaging, family practice, express care, and other medical services.

### **LOCAL TIP: CONSIDER LIFE FLIGHT MEMBERSHIP**

North Idaho's rural roads, lakes, and mountain communities can put advanced medical care farther away. Life Flight Network serves the region and can provide critical air transport when time matters most. An annual membership may help reduce out-of-pocket costs for medically necessary flights provided by Life Flight Network or participating partners. For many North Idaho households, especially those who live, work, or recreate in more remote areas, it's well worth considering.

# THINGS TO KNOW



# IDAHO TAXES



1

## IS SOCIAL SECURITY TAXABLE IN IDAHO?

No. Idaho does not tax Social Security retirement benefits. Social Security income is exempt from Idaho state income tax, although it may still be subject to federal income tax depending on your overall income.

2

## ARE OTHER FORMS OF RETIREMENT INCOME TAXABLE IN IDAHO?

Most retirement income is subject to Idaho state income tax, including distributions from traditional IRAs, 401(k)s, pensions, and other tax-deferred retirement accounts. However, Idaho does provide certain deductions and exemptions for qualifying retirees, depending on age, disability status, and the type of retirement income received. Because eligibility rules can vary, retirees should review their specific situation with a qualified tax professional.

3

## HOW HIGH ARE PROPERTY TAXES IN IDAHO?

Property taxes in Idaho are relatively low compared with much of the country. The Tax Foundation reports Idaho's statewide effective property tax rate at about 0.50%, placing it among the lower-tax states for owner-occupied housing. In Bonner County, the median effective property tax rate is even lower at approximately 0.37%. Actual tax bills vary by property value, location, taxing districts, and available exemptions, but for retirees considering Sandpoint and the surrounding area, property taxes are generally one of Idaho's more favorable costs of homeownership.

4

## WHAT ARE IDAHO PROPERTY TAX REDUCTIONS?

- A **homeowners exemption** reduces property taxes for individuals who own and occupy their home as their primary residence. Example: if your home is assessed at \$500,000, your property tax would be based on \$375,000. This exemption subtracts \$125,000 from the assessed value.
- The **'circuit breaker,'** the Idaho property tax reduction, lowers the total property tax bill for older homeowners who meet certain criteria. Seniors who are age 65 or older may qualify for this deduction if they own and occupy their home.
- **Timber property tax exemption** applies if the property is 5+ acres and the owner's primary purpose is continuously growing and harvesting trees of a marketable species.
- **Agriculture exemption:** if you start selling eggs, animals, meat, or other items from your property, you may be able to apply for an agriculture exemption.

5

## HOW HIGH ARE SALES TAXES IN IDAHO?

Idaho has one of the lower average total sales tax rates of any state. While the statewide sales tax rate is 6%, only a handful of cities charge a local sales tax. Thus, you can expect to pay 6% in sales taxes in most regions.

6

## WHAT OTHER IDAHO TAXES SHOULD I EXPECT?

Idaho does not impose a state estate tax or inheritance tax. However, federal estate taxes may still apply to larger estates, and other taxes can vary depending on your income, investments, and property. Retirees should review their individual situation with a qualified tax professional, especially when relocating from another state.



**YES, YOU CAN  
STACK OR  
COMPOUND TAX  
EXEMPTIONS.**



**HELPFUL NOTE:** Idaho may be tax-friendly in several areas, but every household's situation is different. Before relocating, talk with a qualified tax professional about how Idaho's income taxes, property taxes, exemptions, and retirement-income rules may apply specifically to you.

\*\*\* SCHEDULE A CALL WITH BEN

# THE REALITIES

No area is without its faults, and North Idaho does have some. This isn't meant to scare you away. Our goal is for you to have the full picture. We'd rather you know everything upfront than be surprised after moving here.



## TRAINS & MORE TRAINS

Sandpoint is a train town. Trains run multiple times a day and night, and it's nearly impossible to avoid them. The best you can do is put distance between you and the crossings.



## SMOKE SEASON

Every summer, to some degree, we experience smoke in the area from wildfires in neighboring states. Air quality can be poor for a few days up to a few weeks.



## CELL PHONE SERVICE

Your carrier doesn't matter too much-because cell service in North Idaho can be unpredictable. You'll randomly go into SOS mode, drop calls, or lose service, even in some areas that look like they should have great coverage.



## LONG WINTERS & GRAY SKIES

Winter can be long, cold, and gray. From November through March (and sometimes April), overcast skies are common. Seasonal depression is real and something many locals learn to manage.



## HEALTH CARE CONSIDERATIONS

Healthcare options continue to improve in both Coeur d'Alene and Spokane, but the closest Level I Trauma Center is in Seattle. It's important to understand your specific health needs and how they can be met in the area.



## LIMITED LOCAL, HIGH PAYING JOBS

High-paying local jobs can be limited, especially in certain industries. Many residents are retired or work remotely. If your career requires being local, it's important to plan accordingly.



## NO BUILDING CODES OR INSPECTIONS

One reason people are drawn to North Idaho is freedom and lack of red tape. In Bonner County, that means no building codes, just a location permit and state-required inspections for electrical, plumbing, sewer, and HVAC. While many appreciate the flexibility, it can lead to unorthodox building methods.



North Idaho is a special place to live, but it's important to go in with realistic expectations. We're here to answer your questions and help you decide if it's the right fit for you.

# FINDING THE RIGHT LENDER

The right lender can make all the difference. We recommend working with a trusted mortgage professional who will guide you through the process, offer the best options, and help your transaction close smoothly-without surprises.

Buying in North Idaho can come with unique lending challenges, and the right lender can make the difference between a smooth closing and a deal falling apart. **That's why we highly recommend Sean Cramer.** After working with him for years, we've seen him solve problems quickly, stay calm under pressure, and save countless transactions that could have otherwise fallen apart. For you, that means better communication, more confidence throughout the process, and a stronger chance of getting to the closing table. We receive no referral fee or kickback for recommending Sean. **We recommend him because we've seen firsthand what that level of service can mean for our clients.**

Even if you're six months or more from buying, reaching out to Sean early allows him to be part of the planning process and help you build a game plan around your goals. That way, when the time is right, you're positioned as best as you can, and you can move forward with confidence.



## THINGS TO REMEMBER

Avoid major financial changes before closing. Don't open new credit accounts, finance large purchases (car, furniture, boat, etc.), or make big deposits without talking to your loan officer first.



## OUR RECOMENDATION

We've trusted Sean Cramer and Highlands Residential Mortgage for years. They provide exceptional service, clear communication, and a smooth lending experience from start to finish.



### Sean Cramer

Senior VP, Mortgage Loan Originator

425-802-2507

SCramer@highlandsmortgage.com

HighlandsMortgage.com

NMLS# 1100122



**HIGHLANDS**  
RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE



# BUYER FAQs



QUICK ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS BUYERS ASK ABOUT AGREEMENTS, INSPECTIONS, TIMELINES, AND WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN WORKING WITH US.

## 1 AS A BUYER, DO I HAVE TO SIGN A REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT WITH YOU TO SEE A HOUSE?

Yes, this is a national requirement. Many agents ignore this, but we choose to follow the rules. This creates clarity around the services provided and how compensation works. Many clients choose an agreement through the end of the calendar year, but we also offer a single-showing agreement for those who are still exploring their options.

## 2 ARE THESE REPRESENTATION AGREEMENTS NEW?

In some places, yes. Many states have required them for years, while others have not. That is why you may not have used one in the past. Regardless, written buyer agreements are now a nationwide requirement with real estate agents before touring a home.

## 3 ARE COMMISSIONS NEGOTIABLE?

Yes. There is no set fee or standard commission structure in our area. Different offices charge different fees, and each company's broker determines what they charge for marketing, real estate services, and expertise.

## 4 WHEN DO I NEED TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT?

You must enter into a written buyer agreement before touring a home with a real estate agent, whether in person or virtually. If you are simply visiting an open house on your own or asking about services, you do not need to sign one yet.

## 5 DOES THIS MEAN AS A BUYER I HAVE TO PAY MY REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL OUT OF POCKET?

Not necessarily. Your agreement explains your responsibility, but you can still request, negotiate for, and receive compensation for your real estate agent fee from the seller or the seller's agent.

## 6 HOW DO YOU ASSIST THOSE WHO ARE RELOCATING FROM OUT OF STATE?

We provide a detailed relocation guide free of charge and offer Zoom virtual tours to help clients explore properties and the area remotely. Our team is ready to support your move and connect you with trusted moving companies, tradesmen, and other local resources to make the transition as smooth as possible.

## 7 IS A HOME INSPECTION NECESSARY IF I'M BUYING NEW CONSTRUCTION?

Yes. There are many steps involved in building a home, and things can be missed. At Elite Realty Partners, we always recommend a home inspection when purchasing a home, including new construction.

## 8 HOW DO YOU GUIDE CLIENTS THROUGH THE REAL ESTATE PROCESS FROM START TO FINISH?

We begin with a buyer intake form, then schedule a Zoom discovery call to better understand your needs and preferences. During that conversation, we explain what you can expect from us and share insight into the current market so you feel informed and prepared from the beginning.

## 9 AS A BUYER, WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

We love working with buyers, whether you are purchasing for the first time or have bought before. We are a full-service, end-to-end company that will be with you every step of the way. We tailor a game plan specific to you, connect you with trusted vendors, and always put your interests first.

## 10 AS A BUYER, I WON'T BE BUYING A HOME FOR 3 MONTHS. WHEN SHOULD I START THE HOMEBUYING PROCESS?

Earlier is better. Whether you are paying cash or financing, starting the process about three months before you want to actively search gives you time to get organized, ask questions, and be in the best position possible when you are ready.



**HELPFUL NOTE:** Every buyer's situation is different. If you have questions, we are happy to walk you through the process before you are ready to tour homes.

# INSIDER TIPS

## BEFORE YOU MOVE HERE

North Idaho comes with a level of freedom that attracts a lot of people to the area, but that freedom also means some things work differently than they may where you live now. These are the kinds of local details that are easy to overlook when relocating, but are worth understanding before you buy.



### PROPERTY, BUILDING & IMPROVEMENTS



#### **NO COUNTY BUILDING CODE IN BONNER COUNTY**

Bonner County has not adopted a countywide building code since 1997 and does not perform structural building code inspections. A Building Location Permit is still required for new structures, additions, or expansions, while state permits and inspections apply to electrical, plumbing, and HVAC work.



#### **CONTRACTORS STILL HAVE STANDARDS TO FOLLOW**

The lack of county structural inspections does not mean contractors can simply build however they want. Idaho contractors must be registered with the state, and registered or licensed trades are still responsible for meeting the standards that apply to their work (the International Building Code). Electrical, plumbing, and HVAC work remains subject to state permitting and inspection requirements.



#### **PRO TIP: INSPECTIONS MATTER HERE**

Because Bonner County does not inspect the structural construction of homes, you may occasionally come across unconventional building methods or homeowner-completed projects. A thorough home inspection, and sometimes additional specialty inspections, can be especially valuable when buying a home in North Idaho.



#### **REMODELING CAN REQUIRE LESS RED TAPE**

Interior remodeling projects in Bonner / Boundary County do not require a building permit when you are not expanding or relocating the structure. Expanding the footprint or adding a new structure does require the need for a Building Location Permit. Add a bedroom, add a bathroom, convert the garage into living space; a permit is not required.



#### **ADDING SOLAR CAN BE SIMPLER**

Bonner County does not have the traditional structural building-permit process that many homeowners are accustomed to for a typical solar installation. However, electrical permits and inspections are still required by the State of Idaho, and other property-specific requirements may apply.



#### **TREE REMOVAL IS GENERALLY FLEXIBLE**

On most private property in unincorporated Bonner County, there is no general county permit required simply to remove trees, and the county does not maintain a list of protected tree species for ordinary residential property. Shoreline rules, utility easements, HOA restrictions, or other property-specific regulations can still affect what you can remove.



## LAKE & UTILITIES



### LAKE PEND OREILLE IS LOWERED EVERY FALL

Lake Pend Oreille is intentionally drawn down after the summer recreation season as part of the operation of Albeni Falls Dam. In 2025, for example, the lake was scheduled to drop roughly 11 feet from the summer pool by mid-November, and the Army Corps of Engineers begin gradually refilling the lake again in early spring to be at full pool by Memorial Day weekend. The waterfront can look dramatically different in January than it does in July.



### SEWER LATERALS CAN COME UP DURING A SALE

If you're buying a property connected to the regional sewer system in places such as Sandpoint, Ponderay, or Kootenai, ask about the sewer lateral early in the transaction. Sandpoint's SLIP program, for example, requires an inspection before the sale of qualifying buildings unless the lateral has been inspected within the required timeframe. Sandpoint does not require the same lateral to be inspected more than once every five years.



## REAL ESTATE & LOCAL DETAILS



### IDAHO IS A NON-DISCLOSURE STATE

Unlike many states, the final sale price of a home in Idaho is generally not available to the public through county property records. That means simply looking up a neighbor's property online won't necessarily tell you what they paid, making accurate comparable-sales data especially useful when evaluating a property.



### FREEDOM COMES WITH RESPONSIBILITY

One of the things people love about North Idaho is the relative lack of red tape, particularly in rural areas. The tradeoff is that buyers sometimes need to do more due diligence themselves. Understanding permits, septic and well systems, property boundaries, easements, construction quality, and local regulations can be just as important as evaluating the home itself.



**PRO TIP:** When in doubt, ask questions before you buy. A little research up front can save you time, money, and stress down the road. We are here to be a trusted resource for you

# Sandpoint's #1 Boutique Real Estate Team

Licensed in Idaho

WORK  
HARD.  
*Be Kind*

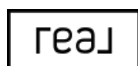


Recognized as Bonner County's **Best Real Estate Agency in 2024, 2025 and 2026**, Elite Realty Partners combines genuine relationships, professional marketing, and strong local insight to deliver results. Whether buying, selling, or investing, you deserve a team that treats your move like it matters - because it does. With over 140 Five-Star Google Reviews, **we have the knowledge, the experience, and the trust of the community** to help you with your real estate buying and selling needs.

## Schedule a call with Ben



  
**ELITE REALTY**  
PARTNERS



301 North 1<sup>st</sup> Ave #202A  
Sandpoint Idaho 83864

